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DOMESTIC WAYS AND MEANS.

BY A FAMILY MAN.

To most, if not to all, households there comes, at some period of their several histories, a time when it becomes desirable to cut down expenses to the lowest possible figure. *Paterfamilias* has perhaps been unsuccessful in his business; or his speculations have turned out badly; or some source of income, hitherto implicitly depended upon, has suddenly dried up. Or perhaps heavier trouble even than this has come upon the family, and he who has hitherto been its stay and support, and whose busy brain and industrious hands have supplied its wants, fills his place no longer; so that where there was a happy wife, who shared her husband's delight in the children gathered round their board, there is now an anxious widow, who has to cater for the hungry young mouths, and to provide for the wearing and tearing capacities of the active young limbs.

Indeed, time would fail us in the task of enumerating the causes which are constantly occurring to make people wish to retrench. The majority of people are seriously affected by these and similar causes—such as a long period of depression in trade, or in some cases a change in the fashions; and those who can regard these things with equanimity and absence of anxiety, are the few, and not the many. Taking the middle classes of Great Britain, we think we may fairly say that the great bulk of them, while they may possess incomes which are adequate to their ordinary expenses, are quite unable to meet any extraordinary charges. Lord Chesterfield told his son to spend no more than two-thirds of his income on ordinary expenses, as extraordinary ones would be sure to absorb the remaining third. But the majority of people do not follow the advice of that worldly-wise peer, and as a consequence, when misfortune comes, it makes them very gloomy, and the

avenues of the future seem entirely closed against them.

It is invariably the case, that when the heads of the household are put together with a view to devising a way of reducing the weekly expenditure, one of the first things to occur to them is the possibility of cutting down the cost of eating and drinking. We are of course not speaking of the people who have hunters or carriage-horses whose numbers they can decrease, carriages which they can sell, or butlers or French lady's-maids whose services they can for a time dispense with; but rather of those whose houses are comparatively small; who keep perhaps a 'general' servant, or at most a cook and a housemaid, or a general servant and a nurse-girl; and who, up to the time of the necessity for retrenchment, have not been leading luxurious or extravagant lives. As a rule, we think the necessity for retrenchment usually comes to those who have apparently not much scope for the cutting-down process; and in these cases, the anxious housewife invariably begins to think of her butcher's bill and of her groceries; and tries to find some method of supplying her family with due nourishment, at somewhat less cost than has hitherto been the case.

Books have been written on the art of economy, and from the ready sale which they have found, we may judge of the widespread desire there is to economise. Occasionally, we see correspondence in the newspapers detailing isolated experiments in living on little. Everybody apparently is interested in learning 'how to live on sixpence a day,' or as much less as possible. We once met with the case of a medical man who held the office of coroner of a large midland town, who lived for a fortnight on a four-pound loaf of bread, and who was very proud of the experiment. During the severe frost of 1880-1, a correspondent of one of the most influential provincial newspapers explained with much precision how he had managed to exist with great comfort and gratification to himself on the small sum of one-and-

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ninepence per week. And many years ago, during the potato famine in Ireland, a medical man, who is still living and well known in the east of Scotland, set himself for several months to live on three or four pence per diem, and succeeded! His fare was bread, meal, and water.

But there is, we imagine, a prevalent feeling that instances of this kind are not valuable or practically useful to the general run of people. A domesticated housewife is apt to shake her head at the tabulated items, and to ask how she and her family would look after the experience of a month of such meagre regimen. Her husband perhaps tries the method for six days, and at the end thereof, feeling slightly unwell, gladly indulges on the seventh in a Sunday dinner of old-fashioned proportions, and feels decidedly the better for it. But we are quite convinced that there are methods of economy, and items of experience in thrift, which are worthy of the attention of all who wish to reduce their expenses, and which even the most practical need not regard with incredulity. In the instances of frugality we have alluded to, one has a sort of undefined consciousness that they have been chiefly practised by exceptional people, who, by some happy constitutional peculiarities, have been able to live and thrive on fare which would be to others the extreme of hardship. It is rather with the view of rendering some help to ordinary people, that the present writer proposes to give the results of some of his and his wife's experience in the art of cutting down expenses.

At the outset of these details, he may explain that he and his wife are of the age of forty or thereabout; that their family consists of five strapping boys, the eldest of whom is eleven, and the youngest two years old; and that their domestic retinue is composed of an active 'general' servant-girl of twenty-five, and a useful nurse-girl aged fourteen. He may also intimate that every member of the household is possessed of fair health and appetite; the latter characteristic being perhaps shared in the largest degree by the two servants and the eldest boy; but of no member of it can it be said that he or she is an exceptionally small eater. It is the habit of the family to breakfast soon after eight o'clock; after which the two elder boys go off to a school two miles distant; number three departs to a lady's school close at hand; and the father to his business. Boys numbers one and two take with them a hearty lunch of bread-and-cheese or bread-and-butter, which they eat in the middle of the day, at which time the rest of the family assemble to dinner. At about five o'clock, the two boys return from the distant school, and have their dinner, while the other members of the family partake of tea. The scholars, after a little play, get to their lessons till eight o'clock, when they have a slight repast, and then to bed; the infants—namely, the two-year-old and his next brother, who is four—having meanwhile gone quietly to sleep. At nine o'clock, the heads of the household sit down to a simple supper, and are able to indulge in their first opportunity for the day of talking over current events and domestic affairs.

We kept an accurate account of our expenditure for eating and drinking for the first seven weeks of the year 1880, which will be of interest

chiefly because it is a genuine record of the doings of average people. It is not pretended that it displays a household economy arranged on the most artistic principles. It simply claims that it details what we nine people consumed in seven weeks, during which period we enjoyed capital health, and did a fair amount of work. The account is as follows:

Items of expenditure for eating and drinking by a family of nine persons during seven weeks:

	L s. d.
Meat (average price 10d. per lb.)	4 3 2½
Bread (6d. per 4lb. loaf)	1 16 0
Milk (4d. per quart)	1 14 9
Tea (3s. 6d. per lb.)	0 19 3
Sugar (3d. per lb.)	0 16 4
Butter (1s. 6d. per lb.)	0 15 4
Potatoes (6s. per cwt.)	0 13 1½
Beer (1d. per gallon)	0 12 9
Oatmeal (3d. per lb.)	0 12 3
Haricot beans, lentils, and peas (2d. per lb.)	0 5 10
Flour	0 4 8
Eggs	0 2 0
Treacle	0 1 9
Rice	0 1 9
Green vegetables	0 1 7½
Spirits	0 1 6
Fish	0 1 4
Mustard, pepper, &c.	0 0 7
Vinegar	0 0 6
Salt	0 0 2
Total	L13 4 8½

On perusing the above account, some items of which might of course be omitted, if necessary, we are of opinion that the item 'Meat' might with advantage be reduced, and the item 'Fish' augmented, which last is small in amount in consequence of the difficulty of procuring fish in our neighbourhood. Farther on in the year, too, the item 'Green vegetables' will be considerably increased; and we may also say that exceptional circumstances cause us to pay a higher price for tea and oatmeal than we otherwise should.

Taking the amount as it stands, L13, 4s. 8½d. for seven weeks gives a weekly expenditure of L1, 17s. 9½d., or 4s. 2½d. per head; or a daily expenditure per head of about 7½d. Thus, although we have not quite reached the minimum of 'sixpence a day,' we have come somewhat near it, and have enjoyed a much more diversified diet than the advocates of a 'sixpence-a-day' system generally allow.

It will be of interest to the domesticated reader to know some details of this example of living. For breakfast we take oatmeal porridge, bread-and-butter and tea, with an occasional slice of bacon, which is included under the heading 'Meat.' For dinner we have cold meat, or cold meat cookeries—we never cut our joints hot—potatoes, bread-and-cheese, and beer; diversified by the periodical addition of soups, puddings, or tarts. For tea we have bread-and-butter, toast or bread-and-treacle; and for supper, bread-and-cheese and beer, or haricot beans, lentils, or the like, cooked in various ways.

The housekeeper with a growing family soon discovers that it is necessary narrowly to watch every avenue of expense, if retrenchment is to be effected, and that nothing is more imperative than that she should have all her stores under her own eye and regulated by her absolute control. Servants are too apt, for instance, to throw away any bones which are cut off from the joint in the

process of carving. These should be collected in a suitable vessel for boiling down into soup.

Domestics are also given to using more of any material they may have to deal with than is required. If they make a pudding, they make more paste than is absolutely necessary; and the overplus is converted into an additional cake or tart, the fate of which is either to be eaten between meals by the servant herself, or given to a child; an entirely unnecessary luxury, that does good to nobody. Pieces of bread are wasted; potatoes are denuded of their coverings with too careless a hand, so that out of the parings, a rigid household economist would probably think it possible to concoct a nutritious meal; or he might insist upon the potatoes being served invariably in their 'jackets.' We may say that potato parings mixed with small-coal or slack will keep the afternoon kitchen fire going admirably.

Savoury and wholesome dishes may be made by mixing meat with vegetables or rice, which will be found a far less expensive method of using animal food than that of cooking steaks or chops. The untidiest fragments of cold meat can be made into presentable *pièces de résistance* for the economical family, by this mode. There is no more satisfying dinner than a thoroughly well-made Irish stew; while one of our favourite Saturday repasts, and one which is highly appreciated by our hungry boys, is a substantial potato-pie.

'Dormers'—which are a compound of a small proportion of meat with a goodly proportion of rice—are always a toothsome delicacy, if served up with the good gravy which a skilful house-keeper can always manage to get from her weekly joint; and directions for all these cookeries can be found in the simplest book of recipes.

It is not beneath the attention of any wise and sensible man to take an interest in these apparently small matters; and narrow means are a positive blessing, if they drive people from extravagant ways into finding out how to do well with little. It is possible to live a happy, healthy, and independent life on a comparatively small income, a life that need not be sordid and small, but which may rise to great heights of culture and refinement.

VALENTINE STRANGE.

A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER VII.—'OH,' SAID GERARD, 'THAT'S JOLLY'S SISTER.'

DURING the foregoing brief colloquy, Mr Strange had kept his eyes upon the lady's face, and had confirmed his first impression of her beauty. Constance was not unaware of his glance—what young woman would have been?—and Val's aspect was not unpleasing. He was evidently a gentleman; and then Constance, who was as little vain as most really beautiful women really are, remembered that his horse's head had been turned in the direction from which she herself had come, and she knew perfectly well that he had followed for the express purpose of looking at her once more. Men often did that

sort of thing. And she had no especial resentment for it. Feminine human nature likes to be admired; and, for that matter, even the very ugliest male amongst us is not superior to the feeling.

Mr Jolly had no sooner settled in the county, than he had begun to inform himself of the position and expectations of every eligible *parti* within its limits—as indeed became a father who was anxious that his daughter should be happily settled and out of his way. In the course of his researches, he had lighted on the fact of the existence of one Valentine Strange, who was reputed to be the wealthiest man of those parts, an orphan, whose great estates had been nursed through a long minority by guardians careful of his interests, and who now had undisputed control of his own. Mr Jolly had made inquiries about Valentine Strange, and had learned that he was a bachelor of marriageable age, and not unlikely to marry, and had even discovered at last that the said Valentine was a friend of his own son's. He had especially desired that Valentine Strange should be made free of his house; but that young gentleman having perversely gone away a-yachting, there was no more to be said about the matter, and such matrimonial traps as could fairly be laid must be laid in his absence. Mothers with marriageable daughters, and they only, will be able to sympathise with Mr Jolly. He had no wife to plot and plan for him. He had all a fond father's desire to see his daughter happily established; and apart from that, the girl was an expense and a nuisance. Therefore, he would have been sorely vexed could he have guessed that to-day he had dismissed the wealthy Mr Strange, the marriageable Mr Strange, so cavalierly.

Mr Jolly had his grand manner, and when he assumed it, he was as frosty as Mont Blanc, being of opinion that to be icy was to be majestic. He had assumed his grand manner now, and fancied that the stranger of the morning's ride had gone away in deep reverence of spirit. Perhaps Mr Jolly was less majestic than he thought himself—perhaps Val was an unusually irreverent young man. His mind was occupied with a pleasanter theme than Mr Jolly's manner. The appearance of Constance did not strike him as it had struck Gerard Lumby. The two young men were totally different in nature and manners. Gerard had a knightly tenderness and respect for all women, and had scarcely ever kissed any feminine lips but his mother's. He would have done any hard and dangerous thing rather than have been forced to pay a direct compliment to a young woman. To him, women seemed more than human—even a housemaid had a nimbus about her, a sort of protecting something which overawed him. But Val in any fresh country-house knew

every petticoated soul within it in a week, and made love to all of them in a way—hostess, daughters, guests, maids in service, with a fine merry indifference which won the female heart. And he did not worship—but prided himself on understanding—the sex; showing thereby his own weakness and folly. Here and there—after years of close and tender intercourse, broken by the rubs of life, made sweet by birth, and holy by death of little children—one man learns to understand one woman; but to strive to sum the sex were a vain arithmetic, though a man had the years of Methuselah in which to perform it.

Val rode away admiring, but by no means subdued. The encounter had taken place within a couple of miles of Lumby Hall, and he was on his way thither to surprise Gerard. And it chanced that Gerard was back in time to be surprised; for no sooner had the hounds thrown off, than there came a check; and the young fellow, after sitting disconsolately on horseback for some five minutes, waiting for the hounds to recover scent, felt the 'blind boy's butt-shaft' so rankle in him, that he turned, and rode almost savagely homewards, sorely troubled by the beauty of the incomparable Constance all the way.

'Ahoy!' cried Val, discerning Lumby's figure before him in the road.

'Why, Strange, old man,' said Gerard, reining in as Val came plunging up, 'you look like a Red Indian. Have you circumnavigated the world yet?'

'Not yet,' said Val. 'The fact is that when we got to Calais—we went there first, you know—Gilbert had a plan. Gilbert's a wonderful fellow at a programme, and his notion was that we might send the yacht down to Trieste—'

'Trieste?' cried Gerard.

'And that we might join it there. So we had a fortnight in Paris, and a fortnight in Vienna, and a fortnight in Venice; and then we got aboard again, and went to Naples. Charming place, Naples. Lots of pleasant people there.'

'Stay there long?' asked Gerard.

'Well,' answered Val with a little laugh, 'I've only just got back. Gilbert met a fellow, and wanted to go coasting round everywhere. So I let him go; and they went to Athens and Smyrna and Corfu, and all sorts of places. Then they called for me; and we have just come up, past Gibraltar and across the "Bay of Biscay, O," to Southampton—and here I am.'

'And when are you off again?'

'Don't be in a hurry to get rid of me,' said Val. 'I shall cruise again in the summer, I daresay; but I'm not going to brave the dangers of the wintry deep in a cockle-shell any more.'

'Shall you stay for the hunting?' asked Gerard. He was afraid that Strange would see his idol. He was afraid of everybody, distrustful of himself, despairing of success, and spiritually sore all over.

'Now, did you ever know me hunt?' Val asked, in almost an injured tone. 'Am I the man to risk my bones for nothing? I hate to make a toil of a pleasure. I am not ambitious to go about with a crutch. I have no yearning to be trepanned.'

'Then what shall you do?' asked Gerard. 'What's the good of being in the country if you do not hunt?'

'I don't know,' responded Strange. 'It's a bore to have plans.' Then Val began to tell of his adventures; and they reached the house, and sought Gerard's den together. Above the mantel-piece, framed in violet-coloured velvet, was a coloured cabinet portrait of Constance, which Gerard had begged from Milly. Strange stood with his elbows on the marble slab and examined it critically. Gerard, observing him, endured a ridiculous pang of jealousy.

'Who is she?' asked Val, with his head on one side, smiling at the picture through eyes half closed.

'Whom do you mean?' returned the disingenuous Gerard, feigning to be busy in the attempt to open a cigar cabinet.

'The lady here. I met her in the lane this morning on horseback, escorted by an old-Indian sort of man.'

'Oh,' said Gerard, with mighty unconcern, 'that's Jolly's sister.'

Strange, standing a little back, began to spout Bassanio's speech :

What find I here?
Fair Portia's counterfeit? What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are severed lips
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here, in her hair
The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes—
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his,
And leave itself unfrustrated.

'What's all that rubbish about?' asked Gerard roughly. At these hyperbolic praises, a keen pang of jealousy ran through him. Who had a right to praise her?

'The rubbish was given to the world by the Swan of Avon,' said Strange; 'and Jolly's sister's portrait is worthy the praise.'

'Never mind the Swan of Avon,' said Gerard.

—'Do you think of going back to Naples?'

So they drifted into talk again; but Strange could not or would not cease to admire the portrait.

'I say, Lumby,' he said at length—'tell young Jolly I'm back again, when you see him next; and bring him over to my place, and have a day or two with me.' He was standing again before the portrait when he said this; and a sudden resolve passed through Gerard's mind, and made him tingle all over. Late that night, when Strange had gone, and Gerard was in his own room alone, he gave words to this resolve.

'I can't afford to waste a day. I will speak to-morrow.' His heart beat against his side, and he trembled. What a thing is love! It was only a quarter of a year since he had first seen her, and, without her, life seemed not worth the living. Whatever of spiritual loveliness his manly heart and honest nature could conceive, with that he dowered her. He worshipped at her shrine with such sacrifices as such men offer; whilst she sat with dreamy eyes over a book in her little boudoir at the Grange, and looked, as he figured her, an inspiration for painter and

poet. But we know what Portia's golden casket held. Constance was thinking of Gerard, and weighing the chances of his coming, and her pulse beat evenly, and her bosom was unmoved.

MODERN IMPROVEMENTS ON BOARD SHIPS.

We often hear people talk of 'the ship of the future,' in connection with sundry speculations as to the probabilities of what that ship will be like in various respects. In point of fact, however, we may doubt whether there will ever be a typical ship of the future, any more than there is of the present. Changes and improvements are constantly being effected, and every new thing, as it is perfected, becomes but a step of transition to something else. It seems probable, certainly, that vessels have reached their maximum size; for, in spite of our present huge and splendid Atlantic steamers, a reaction is already setting in in favour of smaller craft, both in the navy and merchant service, as being more easily handled, less expensive to work, of lighter draught of water, and possessing greater capabilities of visiting narrow harbours and ports, and of lying alongside wharfs or quays—the last named being a very important item in considering the cost of taking in or discharging cargo. It is not likely that we shall ever see another *Great Eastern*.

It is not, however, to technical comparisons and details of the build or style of ships that this paper is devoted, but to those alterations which have taken place of late years in smaller but not unimportant appliances connected with their working; and all more or less directed to the economy of life and labour, such as improved mechanism for rescue or avoiding danger, and various forms of apparatus which have diminished the number of hands formerly necessary to man our ocean vessels.

A pitch-dark night; no moon or star; blowing and raining; the inky blackness relieved only by the crests of the nearer waves, which rise almost to the level of the rail as the ship rolls heavily. A cry—'Man overboard!' Bustle, hurry, and excitement, but no confusion. In less time than it takes to write these words, the man who happens to be nearest will have rushed to the stern, even as he gives the alarm, and with his jack-knife will cut adrift the lanyard that holds the life-buoy, always in readiness there, to the taffrail. This, by the very act of falling, fires a rocket, and displays a flag on the staff that surmounts it. But a flag is of as little use as ornament on a night like this; so the officer of the watch on the bridge, while giving the necessary orders for stopping or otherwise manoeuvring the ship to the best advantage, prepares and throws into the sea a life-belt, to which is attached a peculiar float by a short line. This float consists of a piece of wood in which a tin canister is firmly fixed; and the preparation to which we have alluded lies simply in perforating the bottom of this canister, and cutting or breaking off its nozzle-like top—an affair of a few seconds only. It contains a mixture of chemicals, in which metallic potassium is the chief ingredient, and this burns by the contact of the water itself! No sooner does it touch the surface, than up shoots a bright

white flame, which flares away for an hour or more, quite inextinguishable by rain, wind, or submersion—burning rather the better, indeed, for all three—shedding a brilliant illumination on all around, as it mounts on the waves, and forming a valuable beacon to the imperilled man, if he have any power to make efforts for his own safety.

But while we have been looking at the buoy, boats have been swung out, manned, and lowered; a comparatively rapid and simple process nowadays, even in a heavy sea-way, by means of patent davits, combined with another apparatus termed disengaging hooks. The latter insure that the boat shall be freed at both ends simultaneously as soon as she reaches the water, so that the danger of capsizing, from the dragging of one 'fall,' as the ropes by which the boat is lowered are called, is in great measure obviated; while the former lessen the risk of its being stove in against the ship's side. To prove how perfectly these hooks act, soon after they were adopted on board a steamer in which the writer sailed at the time, during a fearful storm in the Bay of Biscay, a huge sea broke over the quarter, and swept all the after-part of the deck, a wave so big that it lightly touched the bottom of the captain's gig, though it was swung high on the davits and 'in board'—that is, hanging over the deck, and not, as is usual in fine weather, over the ship's side; and away went the gig with its lower hooks into the seething chaos beneath, while the upper ones remained dangling from the falls; a conclusive though costly tribute to the ingenuity of the inventors Messrs Hill and Latimer Clarke. Every one will agree that these Holmes's buoys and speedy boat-lowering arrangements are not the least admirable of modern improvements in nautical matters.

Heaving the lead and heaving the log are familiar expressions to the ear; but are a little apt to be confounded by landsmen, who derive their ideas of things maritime from nautical dramas and novels, in which the characters roll about and shiver their timbers and splice the main-brace, and otherwise talk and act as no sailor ever did or ever will. The lead is, of course, a weight of that metal attached to a long line, employed for ascertaining the depth of water, and is used in two forms. One, the smaller, is swung backwards and forwards in the hand of a sailor who stands on a ledge over the ship's side—technically, 'in the chains'—until it has acquired sufficient momentum to reach the water as far forward as will compensate for the speed at which the vessel is travelling; so that by the time the lead touches the bottom, the man, though still standing, is over the spot where it lies, and the rope is as nearly as possible perpendicular; certain knots, marks, and pieces of coloured rag on it indicate the depth in fathoms, which he immediately calls; for this takes place only when a ship is in shallow water, such as on entering or leaving a harbour, where, if care be not taken, there might be a danger of getting aground.

The other or heavier lead is used farther out at sea, not so much for the purpose of learning the exact amount of water, as to enable the navigator to judge from the depth, and more

especially from the character of the bottom, as indicated in the sample brought up by the wax or tallow in the concavity underneath the lead, the exact position of his ship, and the propinquity of the land. Thus, a vessel coming from any part of the south or west, often arrives in the English Channel, especially in foggy or other bad weather, without having sighted the Lizard Point, Cape Ushant, or any of the other promontories on the English or French coasts. How is the captain to know where he is? He stops, and heaves the deep-sea lead. A result of seventy or eighty fathoms tells him that he is somewhere in the chop of the Channel; and this will gradually decrease, as he goes farther up, to about fifty fathoms. Then, as to which coast he is approaching. In mid-channel the bottom consists of sand and small broken shells at its western extremity, and of 'ooze'—blue clay-like mud—farther east; towards the Scilly Isles it becomes coarse and gravelly; near Ushant the lead will bring up very fine sand without shells; and a little further along the French side, the tallow will catch nothing at all, since the bottom is rocky or composed of large smooth pebbles. It is in this deep-sea lead that all the recent improvements have been made, the most notable being Sir William Thomson's patent. Instead of a lump of lead, a brass cylinder is used, which contains in its interior a kind of registering barometer, which in itself indicates the exact depth by recording the superincumbent pressure of water. Thin pianoforte wire is used instead of a hempen rope; and the great advantage of the whole arrangement is, that it can be used while the ship is going at full speed, since the amount of line which runs out is of no consequence, even though it go far astern. Besides registering the depth, this ingenious contrivance brings up specimens of the nature of the bed.

The log, which is hove under ordinary circumstances every two hours, is a little conical bag made of canvas, the mouth of which is kept open by a wooden pin. When thrown over the stern, this float remains practically stationary while the line to which it is attached runs out, the slight tendency to be towed by the motion of the ship being nullified by the resistance of the bag, whose distended mouth lies towards the vessel. A sand-glass of fourteen seconds is turned as the log goes overboard; and when its time has expired, the log is checked, and the nearest mark on it carefully noted. These knots and marks are so arranged that the line is graduated in parts, which bear the same relation to a knot or nautical mile that fourteen seconds do to sixty minutes—hence the name, not a corruption of *nautical*, as some have said—and the speed per hour is thus obtained. A smart tug on the rope disengages the pin, and allows the bag to collapse and be hauled in by the apex, otherwise it would be extremely difficult to bring it home on a ship going at the rate of ten or twelve knots.

Such is the old log, which has been used from time immemorial, and though not yet entirely superseded, is rapidly becoming so by late inventions. Numerous patent logs have now made their appearance, of which we may notice Massey's and Walker's as fair examples, the rest differing from these only in minor details. The first-

named may be roughly described as a small brass tubular box, to which is attached a screw, like the propeller of a steamer in miniature; this revolves more or less rapidly, according to the speed at which it is dragged through the water, and records the number of its revolutions on an index inside the box. Some few elaborations have been added; but this is the primary principle; and as each revolution means a certain distance traversed—measurable exactly by the pitch of the screw—it is easy to see that when the log is hauled on board, the index will show how far the ship has travelled in a given time. Walker's Registering Taffrail Log has a screw only at the end of the line; this twists the cord, and causes it to work certain mechanism behind a little dial which is fixed on the rail, and thus indicates at any time, without the necessity of hauling in, the distance in miles which has been traversed, and the actual speed at the moment. It also strikes a bell at the completion of every knot, and is altogether a wonderful and ingenious though simple apparatus. Captain Woolward has devised a windlass for pulling in the old log, which not only effects a great saving of labour, and gives a more correct result, from the impossibility of the line getting fouled, and the action of the mechanical break in stopping it, but does away also with those exceedingly painful 'brush-burns' which the men were liable to get from the rope running swiftly through their hands. The constant heaving of the log, especially in a steamship, will soon cut even the brass plates on the taffrail into deep grooves.

Topsails and even topgallant-sails can now be set, taken in, and stowed from the deck without sending any one aloft, by means of an arrangement of rollers very similar to that by which we pull up or lower our window-blinds. Nearly all the standing rigging is now made of wire; and not only hawsers but 'whips,' or ropes for raising cargo from the holds or lighters alongside, of the same material, are employed; such ropes being not only stronger, but one-third the weight, and one-seventh the bulk only, of hemp or manilla. The flukes of modern anchors are made in one piece, bent at a right angle like an arm, and united to the shaft or shank at the elbow by a hinge, on which it revolves, so that when the anchor is down and one fluke has laid hold of the ground, the other, instead of sticking up uselessly and mischievously, and liable to entangle the cable, is folded down flat on the shank.

By-the-way, it is a curious thing that the little anchors one sees dangling from watch-chains or worn as pins or engraved—inevitably foul of a rope—in various ornamental devices, are always incorrectly fashioned, the flukes and the stock or cross-bar at the other end of the shank being represented in the same plane, whereas in the real article they lie at right angles to each other.

A well-glazed chart-room on the bridge not only affords the officers of the watch a constant opportunity of consulting the charts without leaving their posts, but shelters the man at the wheel and those on the look-out in bad weather. This innovation has not obtained ground without great opposition, naturally from the 'old school' of captains and ship-owners, who by their

training are firmly, though erroneously, of opinion that no man can keep watch properly out of an oilskin coat, sea-boots, and a sou'-wester, as they had to do from their youth upwards ; and that a sailor is likely to keep a better look-out when buffeted by wind and rain for four hours, half-blinded with the spray, which obliges him to continually shut his eyes, and it may be, muffled up to the ears to keep off frost-bite, than when 'pampered' under a roof and behind a screening window. Companion-ladders are very different things from what they used to be ; no scrambling up the side by a trembling, swaying lattice of ropes, known as a Jacob's-ladder, now, when every well-appointed ship has two or more commodious staircases, with landings and handrail, let down for the accommodation of boats when in harbour, and folded up longitudinally against the rail at sea.

The commissariat arrangements, also, are greatly altered for the better. Higher speed and shorter voyages have diminished the intervals between different ports, so that fresh meat and vegetables can be obtained oftener ; while the introduction of tinned comestibles—milk especially—has been a grand thing for sailors. Whatever prejudices our workhouse inmates may have, Jack does not object to a good lump of Australian beef or mutton to vary his rations of salt junk from the 'harness-cask.' The ice-trade has done much for comfort on shipboard in this department, by rendering it possible to keep meat, fish, fruit, and vegetables for almost an indefinite period, to say nothing of deliciously cool drinks in the tropics ; indeed, the luxurious table and accessories of some of our ocean liners might compare advantageously with any hotel in the world. The writer has conveyed English game, salmon, and Devonshire cream to friends in the West Indies and at the antipodes. It may be remarked in passing, however, that certain delicate tropical fruits, such as mangoes and avogado pears, will not bear transmission ; and that fish, though remaining perfectly free from any taint, loses consistency, and becomes soft in ice.

In steamers, so many alterations are being constantly made in the engine-room department, that the limits of this paper would afford no scope even for the mere enumeration of one-tenth part of them. They are, moreover, mostly of a purely technical and scientific character, and would possess no interest for the general reader. The great invention of compound engines, by which the same steam is used twice, has reduced the consumption of coal in big steamships from eighty or a hundred tons a day to thirty or thirty-five—no trifling consideration, when we remember that the cost of that grimy fuel is about two pounds per ton on the average, at home and abroad. Many fine sailing-ships have been fitted with auxiliary steam-power for use during the prevalence of head-winds or calms, working a screw, which can be disconnected when not required ; and most of them over a certain size now carry a steam-engine of some sort on board, to assist in the working of cargo. Perhaps the greatest advantage of this is, that it does away with the distressing possibility of the supply of fresh water ever running short, as it can always be condensed from sea-water by the steam apparatus. The application of this power in the internal adminis-

tration of vessels is also increasing daily. Steam winches and cranes hoist up and lower the heavy bales with which they are freighted ; steam capstans lift the anchor, or haul taut the immense hawsers that bind the ship to the shore ; sails are set and taken in by steam, pumps worked and decks washed, yards and derricks raised to their position, and big guns shifted ; ventilation effected by currents of air transmitted through perforated pipes, which in case of fire could discharge water or steam instead, in any direction ; punkahs swung in the tropics, and heating appliances supplied in cold regions—all by steam, generated at one common source, which urges an ironclad of ten thousand tons on its destructive battle-rush, and boils coffee in its pantry at the same time. Lastly, there is the appliance for steering by steam—one of the most important of all. One man with a little wheel—a mere toy in comparison with the huge double arrangement required for hand-steering—now holds the biggest ship on her course ; whereas on the old principle rarely less than two under the best circumstances, and in bad weather four, six, or eight men were necessary to keep her steady or put the helm over quickly. When steam steering-gear was first introduced, it was simply applied to the wheel mechanism ; and the connecting rods, chains, and levers remained as before ; now, however, the steam acts directly on the rudder itself, and a great saving of force is effected. Noiseless hydraulic cranes are coming into vogue, and will prove a relief to those whose ears have been dimmed by the rattle of winches overhead.

Swinging saloons, supposed to obviate seasickness, have been tried ; but have not proved a success as yet. Gas is more suitable for boats in the North Atlantic trade than for those which run to the tropics, as it causes the cabins, corridors, and saloons to become insufferably hot. Electric bells are now common in all passenger vessels ; and the electric light is used in some for illumination below ; more frequently it is employed for side, mast-head, and other signal lights ; and the French mail-boats carry a sort of lighthouse on the fore-castle head, fitted with powerful radiators and reflectors, in which the electric light can be displayed at any moment by pressure of a spring on the bridge. This throws a powerful glare on the water all around and far ahead, and facilitates entrance into harbour on dark nights, recovery in case of people overboard, and avoidance of collision in thick weather. In certain war-ships, the guns are fired by electricity.

The greatly improved commercial code of signals which has taken the place of Marryat's older system—though to some extent founded on it ; the perfect telegraphic communication between the bridge and the engine-room ; and the various automatic tell-tales and indicators in different parts of the ship, which not only give the direction of her course, her speed, the position of her helm, and her deflections from the upright or level attitudes in any direction, but enable an officer to see at once whether the order he gives to the helmsman or engineers is obeyed—all these must be noted as excellent alterations or additions in a ship's economy ; and not less so, the regulations of the Board of Trade, that sweet little

cherub who sits up aloft to watch over the life of poor Jack, by making his employers keep him decently warmed and fed; allowing him a certain amount of space to sleep in; giving him lime-juice to keep off the scurvy which his salt provisions might induce; ruling the mode and manner of his payment, that he may suffer no injustice; providing certain boats and buoys, in case he falls into the sea, or gets wrecked; painting a mark on the ship's side as the limit beyond which his floating home may not be submerged by overloading; supplying him with drugs, lest he fall sick; and, when he musters in sufficient number, sending a surgeon with him to look after his health. All these tend in a measure to ameliorate what we have, on former occasions, taken leave to speak of as a hard and often thankless occupation.

A STRANGE STORY.
TOLD BY A LINCOLNSHIRE CLERGYMAN.

CHAPTER I.

It was a dark, gloomy evening towards the end of November. The rain, as it beat in gusts against my study window, was heard plainly enough, in spite of closed shutters and drawn curtains. It even came patterning down the chimney, hissing in the clear fire, and bespattering the brightness of the fender, upon which I rested my slippers, as in loose coat I leaned luxuriously over its genial warmth. I was enjoying a good cup of coffee, and congratulating myself at not being obliged to face again that night the inclement weather, from which I had just entered almost wet through, in spite of overcoat and waterproof.

I had been out many hours, and had ridden over many miles of open unprotected unsheltered roads; for it was one of my days for parochial visitation. I was vicar of a large scattered district in Lincolnshire, in which was combined a good share of the Fen country, and I had very many outlying parishioners. I had just returned from a long and tiresome journey to attend a dying person in an abode of poverty; and the bright contrast of my comfortable little study, with its crimson curtains, the blazing fire shining so cheerily on the book-shelves, not to speak of the pleasure of a change of dry clothes, made me indeed inexpressibly thankful for the temporal blessings I enjoyed. My little vicarage had never appeared happier or warmer to me than it did that evening. No wonder I congratulated myself at not being again obliged to face the soul-chilling rain.

Even while I thus thought, I distinctly heard above the gusts of wind and dropping rain, the noise of wheels on the gravel of the drive, and immediately after, a loud pull at the door-bell. Susan, the housemaid, evidently lost no time in running to the door, judging by the rush of cold air that penetrated into my snug quarters; and from the sound of voices, there seemed to be some amount of parleying in the outer hall. I got up in consternation, sincerely hoping that this might not be another summons to leave home.

Susan put her round rosy face in at the door. 'Oh, if you please, sir, here's a gentleman as wants

to see you on business—Mr Pullingtoft, of the Marsh End Farm, sir, near Grantham; and he's that wet as won't let him wait or send the trap to the stable; and he's a-standing dripping on the door-mat.'

Of course, I instantly hastened to him; and found a tall, stout, burly man, in a shining black waterproof, and a broad-brimmed hat, unwinding a few yards of woollen comforter from around his neck. He was so big he made the hall look small, and so wet that a fog seemed to surround him like a halo, settling like early frost on the polished mahogany table. I was aware that there was a Mr Pullingtoft in existence, a wealthy farmer and cattle-feeder, whom I had never seen, as he lived beyond my borders, but whom I rightly judged this man to be.

'Sorry to intrude on your valuable time, sir,' said Mr Pullingtoft, uncoiling, and disclosing a large face, with double-chin, a large mouth, large white teeth, and small gray eyes of particular shrewdness, a red complexion, and most good-humoured expression. 'And more sorry still to bring such a wet mess into your nice house; it's a night not fit for a dog to be out in.'

'Pray, come into a room with a fire, Mr Pullingtoft,' I said; 'and let us put the horse in the stable and give him a rub down. You are not in such haste but you can stay while that is being done?'

'I haven't a moment to lose,' said Mr Pullingtoft hastily. 'I'm behind time now for an appointment I have at Boston; but I've most particularly wanted to see you, sir, for some time past, but haven't been a-nigh your parts; and now I've come ten mile out of my road a purpose to, and such a ten mile! If I hadn't my carriage-lamps alight, I'd have been drowned in the fen over and over again; and coming on so slow, picking one's way in a strange road, has thrown me back and made me late. Thank ye kindly for asking me in; but I can't do it. So now to business.—How many year, sir, have you a been person here now—ten?'

'Twelve,' I replied.

'Ha! Well, I thought it must have been in the old un's time it was done.' [It was thus he referred to my reverend predecessor.] 'Now, sir, mayhap you remember Phœbe Meadows as was in the school here? She knows you.'

'To be sure I do. Little Phœbe—a nice good girl. She went to service, I remember, out your way, Grantham, two or three years ago.'

'She did. But she left there; and now she's with us; and my wife sets such store by her—and, to tell you the truth, so do I—that I've come to you on her account. Do you happen to know Phœbe's story, sir?'

Yes—upon a little consideration, I did. I was aware that both her parents were dead, and that she had been brought up by Mrs Kirby, a poor old woman in the village, and sent to service when strong enough—the old woman very poor, and now receiving parish relief.

'Right so far, sir. Now, do you happen to know who Phœbe's uncle is, sir?'

'No.'

'None other than Mr Seth Scruby.'

'Seth Scruby!' I was greatly astonished.

Mr Scruby was the richest farmer in the parish, and owner of much land in it, as well as of

another estate, north of Lincoln. Well might I be surprised, and rather incredulous regarding what I heard.

'It is true,' continued Mr Pullingtoft, as if reading the doubt my face expressed. 'Though it only came to my knowledge a few months ago, by chance-like, when I asked what her surname might be, "Meadows?" said I. "I know that name; it's a Spalding name. There was a miserly old farmer there that wouldn't insure, and he was burnt out and ruined."—"That was my grandfather, sir," said Phoebe. "I often heard my poor father speak of it, when I was a very little girl!"—So this led me on to make inquiries; for I knew Ned Meadows made a runaway match with Jane Scruby—and Jane's father never forgave them. Now, do you see it?'

'But surely, Mr Pullingtoft, in common humanity, had Mr Scruby known his niece to be left in poverty, he would have provided for her. Here she has lived in his own parish until two years ago; and how is it that old Mrs Kirby never told me of this fact?'

'Can't tell,' rejoined the burly farmer, shaking his comforter, preparatory to putting it on again. 'There are some things one can't understand. Anyway, it seems that this precious uncle has never in all his life so much as acknowledged the existence of his niece. The poor little thing tells me that both her dead father and old Mrs Kirby told her always to run out of his way when she saw him coming; and so she always did, and she still looks with fear and trembling when his name is mentioned. It seems that, old Scruby having turned his back on his daughter, his son Seth dutifully keeps up his father's intentions.—But now, sir, as time flies, I'll come to the gist of the matter, and cut a long story short. Old Scruby died without leaving a will.'

'How did you learn this?' I asked.

'Lord bless you, it's a fact, known to all the country round, that a will never was found; and Seth Scruby being the only son, came in for everything. Now, sir, what I ask is this: Could old Scruby's daughter Jane be deprived of her legal share in her father's movables, simply by her brother taking possession of everything? If there was no will, and if she was entitled to her portion of her father's movable estate, why, then, isn't Phoebe, this child of hers, provided for? Tell me that!'

A new light now dawned upon me. Certainly there was some reason in the question. Mr Pullingtoft went on:

'This child has never been acknowledged, as far as I see; for what reason, I should like to know. Old Scruby didn't like a poor son-in-law, no more than I should myself; but then, Jane was an only daughter; and she wasn't the first girl that has married a handsome lad with no brains; and what business is it of Seth Scruby's to carry on the grudge against his dead sister? I tell you, sir, it goes sore against my grain and my wife's to see a girl as good as my own children, as far as family goes, wheeling the perambulator and waiting on us. So I am now determined to have a bit of a fight for it at law; and I've come to ask you to be so good as to copy me out the certificate of Jane Scruby's marriage with Edward Meadows; for it was at your church they were married by

the old vicar, and I'll take it to my solicitor at Grantham.'

'I'll get it you with great pleasure, and send it by post.'

'Ah! but you see, sir, I want to take it back with me. Now, could you get it at once? I stay to-night at Boston; and will call for it to-morrow morning at six, on my road home, if you would have it ready, and just leave it out. You see, sir, I want to set about it at once.'

Yes, certainly, I would do it.

It was not a pleasant prospect to get up at five in the morning to go over to the cold church; but after the inconvenience and trouble Mr Pullingtoft was taking in so good a cause, I was ashamed to hesitate, and therefore fairly promised. The worthy farmer hereupon laid down two wet half-crowns on the hall-table, as a fee for searching the register, but which I insisted he should take up again, to go towards the cause of the orphan. Once more I begged him to take some refreshment; but this he declined. We shook hands heartily at parting.

When I opened the hall-door, a gust of wind brought in a torrent of rain and sleet, the draught almost extinguishing the lamp suspended over our heads. The darkness was so intense, that it was some little time before I could dimly distinguish the outline of the horse, covered by a rug, and holding its head low down. The oil-lamps in the wagonette burned but dimly; the black oilskin cover which the farmer had thrown over his trap, made it assume the form of a gigantic coffin, a blacker spot on the black background. Mr Pullingtoft climbed into his vehicle; and it was with great admiration of the worthy man's devotion to the cause of the orphan, that I saw him drive away into the rain and darkness.

I returned to my comfortable seat by the fire, my mind occupied by the tale I had heard, and tried to recall the people he had spoken of as I found them on first coming to the neighbourhood. Old Mrs Kirby lived in a small cottage a mile or so from the village. She had at that time a poor young man, who was slowly dying of consumption, living with her—some sort of relation, I always thought. He would come to church on fine Sunday afternoons, leading his little girl Phoebe by the hand—a pretty little gentle thing, who afterwards came to the school, and was a favourite with every one. As the woman grew older, times had become harder. The few chickens she reared, and the honey from her hive, were insufficient for their support. The little girl at an early age went to service at some distance, and the old woman had to fall back upon parish relief. I had often been to see her; but she was a remarkably reticent and somewhat surly old woman; and she had never told me that little Phoebe had gone to live at Mr Pullingtoft's, nor that a relationship existed between the girl and the rich farmer Mr Scruby.

Then, again, Mr Scruby. He was never, although a churchwarden, a particular favourite of mine. He was a hard man, with a hard face, that did not change its expression when he spoke; a clever man, and a mean one. He drove hard bargains, and prospered, and seldom gave to charities. Although he farmed much land and fattened his cattle at Coryton, in my neigh-

bourhood, he lived there only occasionally, his favourite house being on higher ground, near Lincoln. The old father I had never known; he died before my time; but I passed his tomb every time I went across to the church. A marble tablet recording his virtues and sound judgment, was on the wall behind the reading-desk; while immediately below it, in front, was the square pew belonging to Coryton Farm, and occupied by Mr and Mrs Scruby; she in rustling silk fit for a dinner-party, that crackled every time I said 'Let us pray'; and waving feathers in her bonnet, that always caught my eye over the edge of the Bible, in reading the lessons. Yes; Mr Scruby certainly seemed exactly the kind of man to keep up the resentment of his father towards the unfortunate sister and her no less unfortunate child, Phoebe, especially as he had three sons of his own, for whom he was saving fortunes, scraping, and making the hard bargains already mentioned.

I fully entered into Mr Pullingtoft's view of the case. Surely Jane Meadows had been entitled to something from her father, even though he had died without a will; and if such was the case, then it stood to reason that her only child Phoebe ought in the ordinary course of things to have inherited that something. Pondering thus, I could not but contrast the interest shown in her by a stranger, and the unnatural conduct of the rich uncle, who must often have ridden past the poor child going to school, or wending her forlorn way along the muddy roads. I would get up early in the morning, and go over to the church, and copy out the certificate of her parents' marriage; and afterwards I would call on old Kirby, and see what she had to say.

The thought of getting up from my warm bed to go out in the dark of a raw November morning, here selfishly occurred to me, and I thought, Why not go to-night? Better to get it done with, and have it ready to be put into Mr Pullingtoft's hand the first thing in the morning.

An extra violent gust of rain beat against the window, as if to put my resolution to the test; but I had determined; so, springing up, I hastened to provide myself with a candle and a box of matches, and taking from their nail the keys of the church, I rang for my boots, re-donned my still wet gaiters and waterproof, and again sallied forth. It was with some difficulty I held up an umbrella, as it nearly turned inside out at the corner of the house. The church was only on the other side of the road; but there was a short avenue leading to the churchyard entrance, and a long winding path through it to the church-door, graves and tombstones on each side. The clock struck the half-hour from ten as I went through the turnstile, to which I had found my way by habit, for I could see nothing but the tops of the rows of poplars as they oscillated to and fro against the stormy sky. Before or since, I never was out in such a dismal night, nor had I ever visited the church at so late an hour. I was rather startled, as I passed old Scruby's tomb—a clumsy sarcophagus, respectably inclosed within iron railings—by something moving stealthily away as if retreating from my presence. A startling coincidence, certainly.

With a little groping, I reached the church-

door, but had great trouble in opening it. Firstly, the key would not turn, as the lock was rusty. Then I had to push the door with all my strength, when I had turned the key; and although I knew it was only a counter-draught, yet it seemed for all the world like some one pushing against me at the other side. I do not think I am a particularly nervous man. I knew my church well, and was proud of the old Norman doorways and windows, its scraps of ancient glass, and its remains of dingy old carvings, and hoped to get it restored some day. But that night it was with an extremely unpleasant sensation that I pushed open the heavy door and entered the silent church.

I lighted my candle, which burned dimly, and had a perceptible halo around it, and the darkness was thereby deepened and intensified. My footsteps sounded unnaturally loud as I walked to the vestry. When there, I placed my candle in an old iron sconce that branched from the wall, and proceeded to unlock the iron safe where the registers were kept. Scarcely, however, had I placed the key in the lock, when I was unexpectedly startled by a noise in the body of the church through which I had just walked, that sounded like the violent banging-to of a door. Thinking I might have left the church-door ajar, I took up the candle, and retraced my steps to secure it. But I found it quite fast. As I walked slowly back up the middle aisle, I looked at the pew-doors on each side, which were open more or less, just as the congregation had left them on the previous Sunday. Yes; all were open save one—that one the last in the aisle, the square pew of the Scrubys, immediately in front of the reading-desk, and it was fast closed. But there was nothing strange in this, as the family had not paid one of their visits to Coryton latterly, and the pew had been many Sundays unoccupied.

I next went round the side-aisles, where some pews had been converted into open sittings; but the doors of all these pews were likewise open. That of the Scrubys was the one exception. I was rather puzzled as to what had produced the noise, unless perhaps it had been the door of Scruby's pew that had so suddenly closed. I must also add that my nerves were somewhat unstrung by the coincidence.

Taking out the old heavy thick volume of the marriage register, I laid it before me open on the table; and after some little time, found the entry I sought. Yes; there it was, plainly enough—EDWARD MEADOWS, aged twenty-three, son of JOHN MEADOWS, farmer, of Spalding; and JANE SCRUBY, twenty-one, of this parish, &c. Two witnesses—THOMAS and MARY KIRBY, and signed by JAMES WILLOCK, *Vicar*—my predecessor.

Procuring pen and ink, I carefully copied out the entry; then, replacing the volume, I relocked the safe, put the key in my pocket, and was preparing to quit the vestry, when, suddenly, without the slightest warning or preparatory noise of any description whatever, once more a door was sharply banged-to with a great noise. This time, I was certain, from the direction, that it was the church-door. I at once hurried thither, and observed in passing Scruby's pew, that the door which was before shut was now open! I was therefore now certain that some one had been in the church.

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Hurrying to the church-door as fast as I could, I shaded the candle with my hand and looked out, but could see nothing, and the night was too stormy for one to hear footsteps outside.

I cannot describe the weird, agitated feeling that took possession of me as I re-entered the church. If some one had really been in the church, as I was inclined to believe, what had been his object? Could it have been robbery or some other form of sacrilege? or had my own life been in danger? I felt nervous and faint, and for a few minutes was obliged to sit down in the nearest pew.

But I would not allow such weakness to affect me; so, shaking off this unpleasant feeling, which I may say was altogether new to me, I boldly walked to Scruby's pew once more and entered it. It had a damp, mouldy smell, and the old chintz-covered cushions and drapery looked faded and musty. There were an old Bible and two old Hymn-books in a corner, where the rich farmer was wont to sit, a little beyond his proud helpmate. But I could see nothing to account for the presence of any one there that night; and while certain that some one must have opened that pew-door after I had seen it shut, I gave up puzzling over it for the time, determining to return and examine the church again by daylight. Anyhow, it was with a feeling of great relief that I got outside, locked the door, and sped as fast as I could through the churchyard. In a few minutes, I was once more in my study, leaning over the blazing coals, and feeling as if just awakened from some unpleasant dream.

PAVEMENT PORTRAITS.

'DOT.'

'She is a beauty; ain't she, sir? You may go a long day's journey afore you meets wi' the likes o' 'er, I can tell you. Now, give me your candid opinion, sir; what do you think she is?'

The speaker, who stood under the grim shadow of Newgate Prison, was a blind man, with a quaint, chestless, backbonless sort of body, propped insecurely on a pair of the weakest-looking legs I ever saw; a man who was most assuredly 'hump' in his construction. But above his body there was a very intelligent face, albeit the complexion was a half-and-half mixture of freckles and dirt. The features were pinched and hungry-looking; but the mouth was sympathetic, the lips seeming ready to express any emotion of pleasure or of pain; but the eyes, alas! useless to their owner. Lanky red hair hung on each side of the face in the same slovenly way as lanky, very shabby clothes hung on his poor shrunken form. In front of this man was a small wooden tray, supported by a narrow strap, which passed round his neck. His right hand rested on this tray, from which it occasionally picked a watch-key, or shirt-stud or pencil, which it then held for a minute or two, pitifully appealing for custom to the passers-by; while round his left was tied one end of a very stout string, to the other end of which was attached 'the beauty.'

Attracted by the appearance of the blind man, I

had stopped to have a chat with him; and it was during the course of our quiet colloquy that the foregoing interrogatories were made. Strange to say, the questions were both of them difficult to answer; and as I looked at the subject of them, I felt like a matriculating student longing for a 'crib'; for I wished to pass a creditable examination, in order to ingratiate myself with the master of the model of this 'portrait,' and I really hardly knew how to do so while adhering strictly to the truth.

'She is a beauty; ain't she?' was the first question; but when I looked down and saw lying in the right angle made by the wall and the pavement something which looked like a yard of good-sized drain-pipe, covered with dirty sacking, from one end of which protruded a black-and-white head—not unlike that chalk-wagging head which is the chief attraction in a diabolical animal sold as a toy rabbit in poor neighbourhoods—while a very long black-and-white tail protruded from the other end, and lay along the ground like a curious piece of piebald rope, I found a difficulty in giving the desired affirmative answer. And then question number two came tripping up the heels of query number one, and it was fortunate it did so, for I was thereby considerably helped.

'What do you think she is?'

Of course I was bound to believe that 'she' was a dog. Here was the blind man, here the string, and what else could the remainder be *but* a dog? But as to the kind of dog it was, I am sure that the whole committee of the Kennel Club would have failed to decide *that*; and how could I be expected to know more than those learned ones?

I made a rush, and passed my 'Little-go exam.' in blind men's dogs triumphantly, as I answered, fearlessly and clearly, 'A very fine creature indeed; no *particular* breed; but, I should say, good all round; a capital companion, and evidently knows a thing or two.'

'Knows a thing or two; you're right, sir; she knows everything. There ain't nothin' as I sez to my missus, there ain't nothin' as she sez to me, as that "Dot" down there don't know. Wherever I goes, she knows why it is as I goes there. When I stops at 'ome, she guesses rheumatics! as properly as I feels 'em. There never was a more cleverer dog; an' in all things she's as good as a 'uman; better, I think, than most 'umans, for she knows 'ow to 'old 'er tongue, an' you can't say that quite truly o' most of the women an' men as I know.'

'Dot,' hearing herself thus ranked above human beings in point of intelligence, roused herself, and four long lean legs emerged from the sackings, stretched themselves to their full length both 'fore and aft,' and then, with great display of leverage, slowly raised up the whole of the canvas cover some fifteen inches from the ground. The drab drapery did not cling in classic folds to the figure of the fair 'Dot,' and there she stood, revealed in the open day, as strange a canine combination as ever mortal eyes lighted upon.

'There she is,' continued the blind man, as he felt the agitation of the string caused by the

bourhood, he lived there only occasionally, his favourite house being on higher ground, near Lincoln. The old father I had never known; he died before my time; but I passed his tomb every time I went across to the church. A marble tablet recording his virtues and sound judgment, was on the wall behind the reading-desk; while immediately below it, in front, was the square pew belonging to Coryton Farm, and occupied by Mr and Mrs Scruby; she in rustling silk fit for a dinner-party, that crackled every time I said 'Let us pray'; and waving feathers in her bonnet, that always caught my eye over the edge of the Bible, in reading the lessons. Yes; Mr Scruby certainly seemed exactly the kind of man to keep up the resentment of his father towards the unfortunate sister and her no less unfortunate child, Phoebe, especially as he had three sons of his own, for whom he was saving fortunes, scraping, and making the hard bargains already mentioned.

I fully entered into Mr Pullingtoft's view of the case. Surely Jane Meadows had been entitled to something from her father, even though he had died without a will; and if such was the case, then it stood to reason that her only child Phoebe ought in the ordinary course of things to have inherited that something. Pondering thus, I could not but contrast the interest shown in her by a stranger, and the unnatural conduct of the rich uncle, who must often have ridden past the poor child going to school, or wending her forlorn way along the muddy roads. I would get up early in the morning, and go over to the church, and copy out the certificate of her parents' marriage; and afterwards I would call on old Kirby, and see what she had to say.

The thought of getting up from my warm bed to go out in the dark of a raw November morning, here selfishly occurred to me, and I thought, Why not go to-night? Better to get it done with, and have it ready to be put into Mr Pullingtoft's hand the first thing in the morning.

An extra violent gust of rain beat against the window, as if to put my resolution to the test; but I had determined; so, springing up, I hastened to provide myself with a candle and a box of matches, and taking from their nail the keys of the church, I rang for my boots, re-donned my still wet gaiters and waterproof, and again sallied forth. It was with some difficulty I held up an umbrella, as it nearly turned inside out at the corner of the house. The church was only on the other side of the road; but there was a short avenue leading to the churchyard entrance, and a long winding path through it to the church-door, graves and tombstones on each side. The clock struck the half-hour from ten as I went through the turnstile, to which I had found my way by habit, for I could see nothing but the tops of the rows of poplars as they oscillated to and fro against the stormy sky. Before or since, I never was out in such a dismal night, nor had I ever visited the church at so late an hour. I was rather startled, as I passed old Scruby's tomb—a clumsy sarcophagus, respectably inclosed within iron railings—by something moving stealthily away as if retreating from my presence. A startling coincidence, certainly.

With a little groping, I reached the church-

door, but had great trouble in opening it. Firstly, the key would not turn, as the lock was rusty. Then I had to push the door with all my strength, when I had turned the key; and although I knew it was only a counter-draught, yet it seemed for all the world like some one pushing against me at the other side. I do not think I am a particularly nervous man. I knew my church well, and was proud of the old Norman doorways and windows, its scraps of ancient glass, and its remains of dingy old carvings, and hoped to get it restored some day. But that night it was with an extremely unpleasant sensation that I pushed open the heavy door and entered the silent church.

I lighted my candle, which burned dimly, and had a perceptible halo around it, and the darkness was thereby deepened and intensified. My footsteps sounded unnaturally loud as I walked to the vestry. When there, I placed my candle in an old iron sconce that branched from the wall, and proceeded to unlock the iron safe where the registers were kept. Scarcely, however, had I placed the key in the lock, when I was unexpectedly startled by a noise in the body of the church through which I had just walked, that sounded like the violent banging-to of a door. Thinking I might have left the church-door ajar, I took up the candle, and retraced my steps to secure it. But I found it quite fast. As I walked slowly back up the middle aisle, I looked at the pew-doors on each side, which were open more or less, just as the congregation had left them on the previous Sunday. Yes; all were open save one—that one the last in the aisle, the square pew of the Scrubys, immediately in front of the reading-desk, and it was fast closed. But there was nothing strange in this, as the family had not paid one of their visits to Coryton latterly, and the pew had been many Sundays unoccupied.

I next went round the side-aisles, where some pews had been converted into open sittings; but the doors of all these pews were likewise open. That of the Scrubys was the one exception. I was rather puzzled as to what had produced the noise, unless perhaps it had been the door of Scruby's pew that had so suddenly closed. I must also add that my nerves were somewhat unstrung by the coincidence.

Taking out the old heavy thick volume of the marriage register, I laid it before me open on the table; and after some little time, found the entry I sought. Yes; there it was, plainly enough—EDWARD MEADOWS, aged twenty-three, son of JOHN MEADOWS, farmer, of Spalding; and JANE SCRUBY, twenty-one, of this parish, &c. Two witnesses—THOMAS and MARY KIRBY, and signed by JAMES WILLOCK, *Vicar*—my predecessor.

Procuring pen and ink, I carefully copied out the entry; then, replacing the volume, I relocked the safe, put the key in my pocket, and was preparing to quit the vestry, when, suddenly, without the slightest warning or preparatory noise of any description whatever, once more a door was sharply banged-to with a great noise. This time, I was certain, from the direction, that it was the church-door. I at once hurried thither, and observed in passing Scruby's pew, that the door which was before shut was now open! I was therefore now certain that some one had been in the church.

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Hurrying to the church-door as fast as I could, I shaded the candle with my hand and looked out, but could see nothing, and the night was too stormy for one to hear footsteps outside.

I cannot describe the weird, agitated feeling that took possession of me as I re-entered the church. If some one had really been in the church, as I was inclined to believe, what had been his object? Could it have been robbery or some other form of sacrilege? or had my own life been in danger? I felt nervous and faint, and for a few minutes was obliged to sit down in the nearest pew.

But I would not allow such weakness to affect me; so, shaking off this unpleasant feeling, which I may say was altogether new to me, I boldly walked to Scruby's pew once more and entered it. It had a damp, mouldy smell, and the old chintz-covered cushions and drapery looked faded and musty. There were an old Bible and two old Hymn-books in a corner, where the rich farmer was wont to sit, a little beyond his proud helpmate. But I could see nothing to account for the presence of any one there that night; and while certain that some one must have opened that pew-door after I had seen it shut, I gave up puzzling over it for the time, determining to return and examine the church again by daylight. Anyhow, it was with a feeling of great relief that I got outside, locked the door, and sped as fast as I could through the churchyard. In a few minutes, I was once more in my study, leaning over the blazing coals, and feeling as if just awakened from some unpleasant dream.

PAVEMENT PORTRAITS.

'DOT.'

'She is a beauty; ain't she, sir? You may go a long day's journey afore you meets wi' the likes o' er, I can tell you. Now, give me your candid opinion, sir; what do you think she is?'

The speaker, who stood under the grim shadow of Newgate Prison, was a blind man, with a quaint, chestless, backbonelss sort of body, propped insecurely on a pair of the weakest-looking legs I ever saw; a man who was most assuredly 'limp' in his construction. But above his body there was a very intelligent face, albeit the complexion was a half-and-half mixture of freckles and dirt. The features were pinched and hungry-looking; but the mouth was sympathetic, the lips seeming ready to express any emotion of pleasure or of pain; but the eyes, alas! useless to their owner. Lanky red hair hung on each side of the face in the same slovenly way as lanky, very shabby clothes hung on his poor shrunken form. In front of this man was a small wooden tray, supported by a narrow strap, which passed round his neck. His right hand rested on this tray, from which it occasionally picked a watch-key, or shirt-stud or pencil, which it then held for a minute or two, pitifully appealing for custom to the passers-by; while round his left was tied one end of a very stout string, to the other end of which was attached 'the beauty.'

Attracted by the appearance of the blind man, I

had stopped to have a chat with him; and it was during the course of our quiet colloquy that the foregoing interrogatories were made. Strange to say, the questions were both of them difficult to answer; and as I looked at the subject of them, I felt like a matriculating student longing for a 'crib'; for I wished to pass a creditable examination, in order to ingratiate myself with the master of the model of this 'portrait,' and I really hardly knew how to do so while adhering strictly to the truth.

'She is a beauty; ain't she?' was the first question; but when I looked down and saw lying in the right angle made by the wall and the pavement something which looked like a yard of good-sized drain-pipe, covered with dirty sacking, from one end of which protruded a black-and-white head—not unlike that chalk-wagging head which is the chief attraction in a diabolical animal sold as a toy rabbit in poor neighbourhoods—while a very long black-and-white tail protruded from the other end, and lay along the ground like a curious piece of piebald rope, I found a difficulty in giving the desired affirmative answer. And then question number two came tripping up the heels of query number one, and it was fortunate it did so, for I was thereby considerably helped.

'What do you think she is?'

Of course I was bound to believe that 'she' was a dog. Here was the blind man, here the string, and what else could the remainder be *but* a dog? But as to the kind of dog it was, I am sure that the whole committee of the Kennel Club would have failed to decide *that*; and how could I be expected to know more than those learned ones?

I made a rush, and passed my 'Little-go exam.' in blind men's dogs triumphantly, as I answered, fearlessly and clearly, 'A very fine creature indeed; no *particular* breed'; but, I should say, good all round; a capital companion, and evidently knows a thing or two.'

'Knows a thing or two; you're right, sir; she knows everything. There ain't nothin' as I sez to my missus, there ain't nothin' as she sez to me, as that "Dot" down there don't know. Wherever I goes, she knows why it is as I goes there. When I stops at 'ome, she guesses rheumatics! as proprely as I feels 'em. There never was a more clever dog; an' in all things she's as good as a 'uman; better, I think, than most 'umans, for she knows 'ow to 'old' er tongue, an' you can't say that quite truly o' most of the women an' men as I know.'

'Dot,' hearing herself thus ranked above human beings in point of intelligence, roused herself, and four long lean legs emerged from the sacking, stretched themselves to their full length both 'fore and aft,' and then, with great display of leverage, slowly raised up the whole of the canvas cover some fifteen inches from the ground. The drab drapery did not cling in classic folds to the figure of the fair 'Dot,' and there she stood, revealed in the open day, as strange a canine combination as ever mortal eyes lighted upon.

'There she is,' continued the blind man, as he felt the agitation of the string caused by the

animal moving—"there she is. Look at 'er now! What do you think of that? Ain't that artful? An' so like a 'oman! She 'ears a little praise, an' at once she wants to show you 'ow well she deserves it.'

"How old is she?" I asked.

"Well, sir, we mustn't talk about *that*; she doesn't like it." And as the master answered thus, the dog stuck one of her fore-legs straight out, and prodded me on the knee, as much as to say: "You rude man, don't ask such questions;" and she waved her tail about—I can't say she wagged it, for it was too long for wagging—as if asking: "Aren't you going to give us a copper? What's the use of your stopping here, if you're not?"

But I was not going just then, even to please the impatient 'Dot'; and I asked the blind man to tell me how she had been trained to lead him about. And he told me,

It seems that the poor fellow has a friend, who must be an original in his way. This friend carpenters all day, and spends his evenings in training dogs for blind clients. As far as I could make out, the plan pursued is this: Blind men, however poor they may be, have a certain number of places to which in the course of their daily life they desire to go for business, begging, or pleasure purposes; and those who, possessing the advantage of the acquaintance of the carpenter referred to, wish for a dog to pilot them safely to these places, give the trainer a list of them. The carpenter having found a likely four-legged pupil, arranges that a nice little feed shall be prepared at one of these places on a given occasion, or several given occasions; and then, having put the poor animal on short allowance, he sets off with it for that place, first informing it where it is going, and continuing to remind it all the way of the name of the place. Arrived at their journey's end, the dog is well fed; and it connects the meal with the name; and under proper conditions will, if it is an apt pupil, always go to the same place again when told to do so.

This, or something like this, was at anyrate the way in which Dot had been trained; and that she would have passed very high in any London Local Examination for dogs, I can safely affirm.

Dogs have, however, as we all know, dispositions as well as talents; and although the latter are easy to discover, the former are often somewhat inscrutable. And so it was with Dot, as the following incident will exemplify.

"You must know, sir," said my friend the blind man, on another occasion to that already referred to, and when I had become quite well acquainted with him and Dot—"you must know, I've got a brother who, though 'e is my brother, I must say is a most out-and-out scamp. 'E's got a good trade, bricklayin'; but 'e won't work steady at it. One day on an' two days off, that's 'is line; an' it ain't a line as pays, of course. But 'e's got a wife, as nice a little 'oman as ever stepped; an' it was more along of 'er that I 'ad Kensin'ton, where they both lives, drummed into Dot's head, so that I might go an' see 'em from time to time. An' I used to go pretty regular; but the visits were by no means nice to make, for there was always somethin' uncomfortable 'appened; sometimes a row between 'im and 'er, sometimes between 'im an' me, an' at last there was words between all

three on us at once; so I made up my mind as I would scratch Kensin'ton off my list, an' leave them as lives there to shift for themselves.

"One o' the pleasantest places as I go to, I must tell you, is at Kennin'ton, close to the Oval; an' what takes me over there is to see an old lady who is very good to all blind folks, me in particular; an' whenever I goes, I gets a good blow-out, an' somethin' in my pocket to "pay my fare 'ome," as the old lady calls it—only she knows quite well as it goes to the 'ousekeepin' expenses. Well, I'd been avin' rather a bad time of it a little while ago—since I see you last—an' I thought I'd go over an' see my good Kennin'ton friend; an' last Tuesday fortnight, I puts on my best coat, an' after breakfast I tells my missus where I was a-goin', an' I gets Dot well in 'and for a start, an' I sez to 'er, sez I, "Kensin'ton!" At least I was goin' to say "Kensin'ton," but when I got as far as "Ken," I catched a great sneeze, an' the rest o' the word was lost.

"Dot an' I sets out; an' we goes all right from Somers Town, where I lives, across the Euston Road, down Gower Street, across New Oxford Street, down Endell Street as far as Long Acre. But when we come to the corner o' Long Acre, Dot, instead o' goin' across the street, an' so down Bow Street for Waterloo Bridge, turns sharp to the right, an' lugs me some yards up Long Acre afore I knew what she was up to. I tries to pull 'er back; but she gets quite obstinate, an' wont listen to a word I've got to say, but drags me on at a killin' pace, all along Cranbourne Street, right as far as Regent Circus, Piccadilly. 'Ere she 'ad to stop a minute because o' the difficulty in crossin', an' I takes the opportunity to speak to 'er quiet like; that is to say, as well as I could in the noise there always is about that part. She wouldn't let me pull 'er in to talk to 'er proper an' close, for she's stronger nor me, an' she kep' the string quite taut. I told 'er most solemnly as I wanted to go to Kennin'ton; but she wouldn't 'ear of it. Now, what was I to do? I knew by this time what she was up to. She was off to that brother o' mine at Kensin'ton; an' I, who 'ad vowed never to go near the place any more, was bein' conveyed there entirely against my will! It was 'orrid! an' the pace she went too; a 'Ammer-smith 'bus, in which I went once, is nothin' to it! All along Piccadilly, all through Knightsbridge, was I dragged by that there Dot, an' we never stops until she pulls up at the greengrocer's shop where Bill—that's my brother—lives. No sooner did we stop, than I 'eard a voice which cut me to the 'art. It was Nancy, my sister-in-law, who comes runnin' out an' flings 'erself on me, a-cryin', "O Tom, 'ow good o' you to come. 'Ere's Bill got's leg broke, an' took to 'ospital, an' a man's in possession o' our room for the rent!"—"Well, I am blessed," sez I;—"ere's a rum go. An' what are you a-goin' to do?"—"I don't know," sez she. "Can't you 'elp us?"—Well, I turns the matter over in my mind presently, an' I tells Dot to go 'ome. She went 'ome; an' the nex' day we goes right enough to Kennin'ton, an' the day after to Kensin'ton once more, an' the man was paid out, an' Nancy was free."

At the end of this curious recital, Dot, who looked at this epoch like one of Pharaoh's lean kine, reared herself on her hind-legs, nearly dragging her master down, as she tried to see

what a harmless City waiter had on a lunch tray which he was carrying to a neighbouring office; and as I said 'Good-bye' to the master, I quite fell in love with the dog.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN AMERICAN 'SPECIAL'

BY ONE OF THEM.

FIRST PAPER.

THE profession of journalism in the United States partakes of a character of individuality unknown in England. If we except George Augustus Sala, James Greenwood, and one or two others—war correspondents not counting—we can find no English journalist who fully answers the requirements of an American 'special.' He must be able to undergo excessive fatigue and hunger, and assume as many characters as Proteus, if need be, at a moment's notice. When his work is done, he must rush back to his office, no matter how long he has been out, and dash off his 'copy' ere he retires to rest.

Politics, the drama, vigorous description, and even religion, must in turn be the subjects of his pen. When 'on the war-path,' his ingenuity must stand a severe strain, in order to devise the means of ferreting out news and stealing a march on his contemporaries. The *New York Herald*, for example, pays immense sums for exclusive news, and should its 'special' prove himself worthy, never grudges him the sinews of war. Some ten years ago, the writer received from it five hundred dollars and expenses for exclusive facts relative to the Newfoundland fisheries, the collection of which took him barely a month. The *Herald* was threatened at the time with no less than twelve lawsuits by enraged 'bulls,' who found the market suddenly going dead against them. The *Herald*, however, stood by 'the chatterings of an irresponsible bohemian,' and invited them to test their grievances, if they were so disposed. Needless to add they did not pick up the gauntlet, and the new commercial treaty—the fish-treaty, as it was called—was indirectly the result.

The American special enjoys numerous privileges. He may travel 'dead head,' or without paying his fare, from Golden Gate to Nantucket Shoals in common with those other bohemians the Pinte and Blackfoot; but I believe these latter only enjoy this luxury on the Central Pacific. Hotels are glad of him at a reduced price; and in most cases he is made a present of his bill, mine host being aware that he may get more than its value back in some cunningly worded description. He marches into the theatres on the free-list; and stalks through a crowd of policemen at a fire, as a ship rushes through the unopposing waters. Indeed, the writer remembers one case in which a special was arrested amongst some hundreds of other citizens at a gambling resort, and was immediately released by the police court judge with an apology, while he censured the sergeant in charge of the raid. 'The mere fact of Mr So-and-so's having been there, ought to have been sufficient evidence to you that he was there in the execution of his duty,' said the judge to the crest-fallen executive.

There was some ground of excuse for this, sad as it may appear to the English reader, from the fact, that in all criminal cases the specials run the police hard in ferreting out the truth; and in some instances the case is 'worked up' in a daily journal before they know the full details at headquarters. Often and often the writer has seen a baffled detective accost an enterprising special, and in a mournful tone ask him if he knew anything. Instances have been known, notably in the Nathan murder case—which is still a mystery—in which it was freely alleged that the police themselves set to work to baffle newspaper-men.

The remarkable coolness of the special in time of peril is also worthy of note. Witness a case in point. On the ever-to-be-remembered twelfth of July, when the Fenians of New York turned out some thirty thousand strong, resolved that three hundred Orangemen should not parade the streets, as they had done on the previous St Patrick's Day, the Empire City witnessed a scene of carnage which is never likely to be seen again. Protected by the ninth, seventh, sixtieth—an Irish regiment—and one or two other militia regiments, these three hundred men marched past the grand Opera-house surrounded by a yelling multitude, who fired revolvers and darkened the air with brickbats. At last, patience ceased to be a virtue. Several soldiers had already fallen desperately wounded. The Colonel halted his men, and gave them orders to fire at the mob.

The writer was one of a numerous band of specials—specially sworn in as constables—amongst the mob. A friend in the ranks shouted 'Look out—we are going to fire!' a warning which was sufficient to cause him to throw himself flat on his face. The mob vanished, leaving the space clear; and while he was wondering how to get out of the dilemma, what was his surprise at seeing Pember of the *New York Times*, in the midst of the fire, calmly roll himself over on his side, produce his note-book, and go from one wounded man to another, jotting down his name, his age, where he lived, and the nature of his hurt. This, while bullets were flying, and unfortunate specials were menaced by the military on one side and the furious mob on the other. This reckless exposure of life and limb was in order that the journal Pember represented might be the first to have 'List of the Killed and Wounded!' on its bulletin boards.

So much for pluck. Now for wit. But the cases are so numerous, that it is difficult to know where to choose. When the Siamese twins died, Philadelphia surgery had the honour of dissecting them; and under the peculiar circumstances—one having died of horror consequent on his brother's death—the public were in a fever-heat of expectation to learn whether they could have existed apart. Various were the artifices resorted to by the specials to gain a knowledge of this fact, the doctors having sternly declared that they would not admit the press, as it looked like pandering to the morbid appetite of the public. Medical students and full-blown doctors with duly 'vised' certificates from other cities increased to an alarming extent. Hospital porters were offered premiums to vacate their positions for one day only.

But all was of no avail; the doctors closed the doors, and the operation began. At its conclusion, it was ascertained that the twins could have undergone a successful severance in life. At that interesting moment, or in the debate which followed, one of the doctors observed an unusually life-like hue upon a subject waiting for dissection. But what was his horror, and indeed the horror of them all, as the remark fell from his lips, to observe the corpse suddenly jump up and make for the door. He opened it in time and fled, followed by the enraged doctors. A cab was waiting outside, and into this popped the supposed corpse, to be driven like mad to the railway station, where the complacent special safely arrived with the knowledge that he had made a big 'beat.'

Another, though not so startling a case was the impudence of 'Joe' H—, who having been thrust with his male companions out of a woman's suffrage meeting, returned half an hour afterwards as a female delegate from New Hampshire, and was requested to take the vice chair! It was not until the meeting was half over, and Joe, in the enthusiasm of the moment, forgot his trick of voice, that the fraud was discovered, and he was forced to fly from the room, pursued by indignant amazons. Joe subsequently distinguished himself by bringing about the memorable 'Blue Monday,' in which New York was for three days in a state of revolution, and the newspaper offices were filled with soldiers, while their editors were under arrest. Joe languished at Fort Lafayette for this; and had it not been for the immense political influence of his friends, would have been shot.

Thus much by way of showing the pluck and wit required by a special; and now for a personal reminiscence or two.

In the summer of 1873, a man appeared at the office of the journal on which the writer was then engaged, and stated that having gone down to Connecticut to assert his claim to some property left him by his father, he had been arrested at the instance of his relatives, and transferred to the Middletown Lunatic Asylum. He had made his escape; and, nothing daunted, was going down again to press his claim. He wished the aid of a powerful journal in case he should a second time be locked up. His statements were so alarming, that it was resolved to send a special to ferret out the system by which a citizen could suddenly be deprived of his liberty. A week after his departure, as nothing more was heard of him, the writer received orders to work up the case.

'But first of all,' said the managing editor, 'we must be able to get you back in New York State on requisition, in case you get locked up; for, if you get entangled in the meshes of the State of Connecticut Blue laws, it would take even a Philadelphia lawyer months to get you clear.'

Accordingly, the writer went up to police headquarters, and while talking to his old friend the Chief of Police, contrived to pick the pocket of Sergeant A—; for which he was promptly arrested, and the proof of his guilt being found on him, conveyed to a cell. A window had been carelessly left unfastened. The special lost no time in getting out of it and making his way to the railway station, whence

he was speedily carried to the State of Connecticut. Stamford was the place in which the alleged lunatic had been last heard of; and accordingly Stamford became the base of operations. Before the evening was out, the special found that the escaped lunatic had been re-apprehended; and that 'the first select man,' with the alleged lunatic's brother, and a lawyer, had been the means of getting him out of the way, and were interested in keeping him out of sight. 'The first select man' answers to an English justice of the peace, and held in his hands an amount of power which was simply alarming. By an old law, he could order the commitment of a vagrant to the State prison for so many weeks; but should a doctor certify that the vagrant was not responsible for his acts, he could be sent to the Middletown Lunatic Asylum, there to be detained until the commission which examined cases quarterly decided that he was not insane. The State paid half his expenses, his relative the other half. Now, it so happened that the first select man in this case was also a duly qualified practitioner. He had merely as a doctor to certify to the man's insanity, and in his magisterial capacity to commit him. The two respectable citizens who were required by the Act to testify to the fact that the person was a fit subject for incarceration were the alleged lunatic's brother and his brother's lawyer. These facts were ascertained by a purely American process known as interviewing, and deadly indeed it is in finding out truth. It must be borne in mind that the various persons interested were interviewed separately on one pretence or other, and their answers taken down on the reportorial note-book as soon as uttered. Patches of conversation taken here and there made in the aggregate very damaging testimony against themselves.

The writer will never forget the sounds of rage which greeted his ears at the old Homestead—the property in dispute—when the virago, who had been pouring forth her account of 'the doings,' under the impression that he was the first select man's clerk, suddenly discovered, by the arrival of her brother, that it was 'a pizen-press feller.' Some two hours previous, he himself had opened his mouth rather too much, believing that he spoke to a land-speculator who had come to him from his lawyer, and had only just been undeceived by him. Indeed, had it not been for the presence of a loaded revolver, a pitchfork which the man picked up might have cut short the writer's career. The next move was to rush down to New Haven and get a lawyer to take out a writ of habeas corpus. While that was pending, Middletown was visited, and the chief of police taken into confidence.

'I'm glad you've come to write up that sink of iniquity,' he said; 'some of the goings-on there are awful.'

'How am I to get in?' demanded the writer. 'I must see the unfortunate man; for I fear that now they know there is some one on the track, they may try to make him mad. I have heard of such things.'

'I'll fix it,' he replied; 'they can't refuse me.'

This proved to be the case; and by pretending that he had a message from the alleged lunatic's sister, the writer was enabled to see him. But

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there deception ended ; for the unfortunate man fell on his knees in a passion of joy, crying, 'God bless you, sir ; I knew you would not let me be buried alive and tortured out of my mind.'

'Tortured out of your mind ?'

'Yes, sir. Because I got angry, they pretended I was dangerous, and clapped me in the strait-jacket in a dark cell.'

'It is only due to you, sir,' the writer said, turning to the governor, 'to tell you that far from being a relation of this man, I am a reporter of the —, bent on exposing the nefarious practices which have resulted in this man's imprisonment ; and I warn you that any ill treatment of him will be at your peril.'

'This deception is most unfair,' responded the governor, a benevolent-looking man. 'The man is a dangerous lunatic.'

At that moment, the alleged lunatic called the special over, and in an agitated manner gave him a piece of paper, on which a used stamp was pinned. 'Take it,' he said ; 'I was going to throw it out of the window.'

Slipping it in his pocket, the special bade him keep his courage up, and took his leave.

To his astonishment and disgust, when he examined the paper, it read as follows :

To the Pope, No. 1 Printing House Square, New York.—I am in Purgatory. Get me out, or the Queen will never forgive you.—A. LINCOLN.

This was a crusher. Clearly, one who could write such nonsense must be mad, after all. There was nothing for it but to go back to New York, and confess that one had been on a wildgoose chase. The chief's dictum put a new face on the matter. 'He may be mad,' said he ; 'but there's villainy in it somewhere. Anyhow, I can give you facts enough about the place to make people open their eyes.'

Under the fear that the *habeas corpus* would be too slow in its operation, and that in the meanwhile the unfortunate prisoner might be driven mad, the special resolved to return to Stamford, and by threats of exposure compel his release. On the following morning, he presented himself at the office and stated his case, accompanying the same with an intimation that it would be as well for the parties to 'knuckle under.'

'Have you any fixed residence in Stamford ?' demanded the lawyer.

'No.'

'I should like to know that you are a duly authorised agent of the paper you mention. Will you show me your papers ?'

The special explained that he had none ; at the same time informing the lawyer that he might ascertain for himself by wiring to the editor of the journal in question.

'I know nothing about the State of New York,' replied the lawyer ; 'the State of Connecticut is good enough for me ; and by the law, you are a vagrant, and guilty of an attempt at black-mail. You'll wish you'd never entered this State, young fellow.'

Two constables were in waiting, as the special's appearance had been anticipated. He was hauled before 'the first select man,' and by him sent into custody. But ere the week was out, he had the

satisfaction of seeing two detectives come with a requisition for him, on a charge of pocket-picking at New York ; and hearty was the laugh at headquarters when he related his adventures.

With the exposures that followed, this article has nothing to do ; but the extraordinary part yet remains to be told. Some New York lawyers took up the case ; and the alleged lunatic, who had in the meantime made his escape from the asylum, received ten thousand dollars ; while his brother and the lawyer were indicted for conspiracy, and convicted. A year after that, the alleged lunatic went really mad in Chicago, after relating his adventures to a reporter of the *Chicago Tribune*.

Whether he was always mad, as his relations declared, or whether the excitement proved too much for him, the reader must judge. The probabilities are that he was one of a numerous not over-strong-brained class of men who get along well enough if they are let alone. There is one thing certain, however—if the writer had been consigned to that horrible asylum, he would not have answered for his own sanity at the end of a month.

THE MAHWA TREE.

THIS is one of the Indian food-trees. The name is spelled in a variety of ways, Mhowa, Malwah, and as above Mahwa, and is applied not only to the *Bassia latifolia*, but to *B. butyracea* and *B. longifolia*, which also bear edible fruits. The singularity of the genus consists in the fact, that not only is the fruit eatable, but the fleshy deciduous corollas are also largely employed by the natives of India for the same purpose, constituting in point of fact a staple, and indeed sometimes the only article of diet available for the very poorest classes during some months of the year. The tree is not unlike our oak in form, size, and the colouring of the foliage ; it grows from thirty to forty feet high ; flowers in the months of March and April ; is found in nearly every part of Central India, and is cultivated in other districts, but not so largely as it might be, considering its valuable properties.

The flowers ripen towards the end of February or beginning of March, the corollas becoming fleshy and tinged with the juices they secrete. They then gradually loosen from the calyx, and falling to the ground, are carefully gathered by the natives—women and children being chiefly employed in this business. They start in the early morning from their villages, carrying baskets and supply of water for the day's use, to where the Mahwa trees grow.

Just before the blossoms are ready to fall, the grass is burnt away in a circle from beneath the trees, in order that none of the precious blossoms may be hidden by it, and so lost. The gleaners of the Mahwa crop remain in the neighbourhood of the trees all day, collecting and sleeping by turns, and return home at night laden with spoil. When the gleaners have come from a long distance, they often make a temporary encampment of huts, formed of branches of trees, and live on the ground until they have collected all the flowers. They never strip the trees entirely of blossoms ; in good seasons, each tree will produce from two to three hundred pounds of flowers ;

and a good many are allowed to remain to seed themselves.

The natives clear a piece of ground in front of their huts, and on this spread out the flowers to dry in the sun. When quite dry, they are reddish brown in colour, and have shrunk to about three-fourths of their ordinary size, and lose at least half their weight.

The tree is a hardy one, and even in poor ground flourishes well. It could therefore be cultivated on land which would not yield ordinary crops. The trees are rented, and the rent varies with various circumstances, such as their abundance in the district, and the quality of the previous rice harvest. Mr V. Ball, of the Geological Survey, says that in the Murpa district the prices paid for permission to collect vary from twopence to four shillings; and from one hundred and twenty to four hundred and eighty pounds per rupee—two shillings—is the price paid for the saved crop. Very often the exchange is made in kind, in salt or rice; the merchants then give a small quantity of salt, and six or eight pounds of rice for a *maund*—eighty pounds—of Mahwa. During the time of the famine in Manbhoom, the average price of Mahwa was twenty-four pounds for one rupee.

Two *maunds* of Mahwa are said to be enough for a month's food for a family of five. It is not generally eaten alone, however, but mixed with different seeds, those of the *Shorea robusta*, the *sdl* tree; and very often rice is added also. When dried, Mahwa flowers rather resemble inferior figs. When fresh, they have a sweet taste, but a by no means agreeable odour. The fruit succeeds the blossoms. It is about the size of a very small apple; and the kernels contain oil, which is of an inferior colour and rancid taste, but is very generally used by the poorer natives for lighting purposes, as well as for cooking; and it is also applied externally as a remedy for wounds, sores, and cutaneous diseases generally.

The freshly dried flowers yield, on distillation, a very intoxicating spirit, called by the natives *daru*. It is usually diluted with from five to ten times its bulk of water, and is then offered for sale at about a penny per quart. Its smell, which is most offensive, cannot, even by the most careful distillation, be wholly got rid of. The natives, however, do not seem to mind it in the least; and even British soldiers acquire a taste for the liquor in time, though they generally hold their noses while drinking it. One hundred-weight of flowers is said to yield from four to six gallons of proof-spirit. The very carefully distilled and rectified spirit is put into oak-casks, becomes of a yellowish colour with keeping, and is said to be little inferior to the best Irish whisky.

The oil is manufactured from the seeds by bruising, rubbing, and subjecting them to heavy pressure. It is a coarse sort of oil; but in the manufacture of soap is largely used in the country, and also for candles. For that purpose, it would be worth in England from twenty-five to thirty-five pounds per tun. It has been tried by candle-manufacturers, and pronounced very suitable, and a valuable oil for such purposes.

Useful as the Mahwa tree is, and valued as it is by the natives, still, they do not protect

or foster its growth as much as it might be thought they would, considering that the flowers and fruit are alike useful for food, drink, and domestic purposes. The cultivation of the tree is not so great as it well might be. This culture might, with very considerable advantage to the country, be fostered by the government, as the trees would yield a revenue, by the duty on the spirit distilled from them, as well as afford food for the poorer native population at certain seasons of the year. No outlay is necessary, as they are very easily grown from seed, the trees propagating themselves in those parts of India in which the tree is indigenous, the seed being generally self-sown. In the Concans, the Circar Mountains, Bengal, Rajputana, Guzerat, &c., the Mahwa tree grows in considerable numbers, and it might easily be spread from thence over all India. The natives are sufficiently alive to the value of the trees to protect them in those places in which they exist, but do little or nothing towards increasing their numbers; and the increase of cultivated land prevents the seedlings springing up, as they would otherwise do in many places. With a view to securing the preservation of Mahwa trees in village areas, it is not now allowed to cut them down, even when they have ceased blooming, without permission. This is a step in the right direction; and if attention is turned towards the cultivation of seedlings throughout India, one of the best food-trees of the empire will be preserved from extinction.

THE DEMON.

SPAKE my Daemon unto me :
'Wherefore discontented be ?
Fearest thou Life's jolting ride,
Long as I am at thy side ?
Spurs thou hast and supple heel,
Hangs not there thy trusty steel ?
Lo ! I follow in thy train,
Careless, whether fire or rain.
See ! my bridle-rein is tied
Firmly to thy saddle's side.
Where thou goest, I will go,
All the dangerous pathways show.'

Then I turned, and there beheld
A Rider following in the wild.
Careless of the storm, he moved
Like a traveller tried and proved.
Strange—his steed was like my own ;
Strange—his face I should have known.
'Brother ! ridest thou my way ?'
Cried I in mine ecstasy.

But my Daemon made reply :
'Thou shalt converse by-and-by.
This day's journey thou must make ;
On the morn, another take ;
Many more perchance thou hast ;
But, when lagging on thy last,
Love shall light the lonely realm,
As a crest upon thy helm ;
And this Rider thou shalt see,
As the better part of Thee.'

C. McK.

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